

PEOPLE and THINGS: By ATTICUS

IT was wonderful to see Sir Winston Churchill on Wednesday evening. He had agreed to present the Duff Cooper Literary Award to Alan Moorehead, who had won it with his "Gallipoli," and Sir Roderick and Lady Jones had lent their house in Hyde Park Gate for the occasion.

The day before yesterday Sir Winston was eighty-two and the public has been worried that the announcements of

literary campaigns than, er, attended the, er, campaign that formed the subject of his, um, prize-winning book."

A year-old baby—Harriet D'Harcourt, Sir Roderick and Lady Jones's granddaughter—brought "to see Winston" gave a happy squeak and we all filed out into the night, quickened by the warmth of that unquenched love of life, bemused with the enchantment of having seen again the greatest man of our times.

Second Time Out

THE Commander of the Anglo-French Forces in the Suez Canal Zone, the urbane General Sir Hugh Stockwell, is said to nourish a secret plan for the bloodless conquest of Egypt. It is to put Jim Laker on at the Suez end and Tony Lock bowling downhill from the Aswan Dam.

Incidentally, Port Said will be General Stockwell's second major Middle East evacuation. As Commander of the Sixth Airborne Division in Palestine in 1948, he concentrated the withdrawing British forces in the Haifa docks area as the Jews and Arabs began their battle for the city proper.

The Jews quickly triumphed and it was General Stockwell who arranged the five days' truce to facilitate the peaceful evacuation of the Arab population. This was the first time for months the British had worked together with the Jews.

These humanitarian services have since been rewarded by the Arab world with the myth that he "sold Haifa to the Jews" for a sum ostensibly stated to have been £40,000.

Dropping In?

With President Eisenhower at Atlanta, Georgia, and Sir Anthony Eden in Jamaica, not more than three hours' flying

time separates the two Heads of State.

I have no inside information on the subject but, in the present state of Anglo-American tension, I shall not be surprised if the two men agree to meet informally, either at Miami or Nassau, both of which are little more than an aerial taxi ride from their present retreats.

Such a meeting was certainly

not part of the Prime Minister's purpose in visiting Jamaica, which was purely for convalescence, and, if a rendezvous is arranged, the initiative would have to come from President Eisenhower.

Outright Winner

TOO little has been made of Mr. Ben Nicholson's achievement in winning first prize in

the Guggenheim International Painting competition.

This is, after all, the second time this year that an English artist has come out on top in a great international competition. More was at stake than the cheque (though 10,000 dollars is still a handy sum of money) and Mr. Nicholson has done what Mr. Lynn Chadwick did in Venice—walked away.

that is to say, with an award for which, only a generation ago, hardly an artist in this country would have been seriously considered.

Master of Co-ordination

Mr. Nicholson, like Mr. Chadwick, is represented in London by the excellent Gimpel brothers. But he is rarely seen in their gallery, for he prefers to dispatch his pictures, glazed, framed, and neatly signed on the back, from the seclusion of St. Ives.

A man of plain habits (he does not smoke, drink or eat meat dislikes parties and has an inordinate fancy for ice-cream) he commands an immediate market in many parts of the world. (Japanese visitors, especially, tend to leave London with a Lock hat under one arm and Ben Nicholson under the other.)

In life, as in his pictures, Mr. Nicholson is a master of co-ordination, and his friends claim that his touch with a table-tennis bat or at the wheel of a car is as unmistakable as it is in the prize-winning "View of Val d'Orcia."

Pity he wasn't in for the 5,000 metres.

Good Pull-Ups

SIXTY British restaurants have so far examined the approval of *Les Routiers*, the French lorry-drivers' association, whose emblem, blessed by thrifty British tourists, stands for good cheap meals, cleanliness and cordiality.

Identities are being kept secret by M. Gilbert Lesage, the organisation's effervescent, patriarchally bearded representative over here, until they appear in the 1957 "Guide de Relais Routiers."

M. Lesage complains that food is still, despite Mr. Harben and others, a banned topic in these islands, and he is determined to set matters right.

In January he is bringing over a party of French Senators, Journalists and hoteliers for a gastronomic tour of hotels from Folkestone to London.

Good luck to them!

Unknown Genius

A RECENT "Soviet Survey" named Mrs. Ethel Voynich as a giant among English novelists while relegating Mr. Graham Greene to the "decadent school of English fiction."

Mrs. Voynich's name was new to me, but inquiry revealed that she now lives in New

York. There my representative called upon her.

He found a bewildered, white-haired old lady of ninety-two who owned to having written one book—a cloak-and-dagger novel called "The Gadfly"—in 1895.

Russian Royalties

Mrs. Voynich explained that "The Gadfly" dealt with the war of Garibaldi and recalled that, at the turn of the century, it was hailed as a "romantic classic of revolutionary fiction."

In Russia, the novel has run into ninety editions, been translated into seventeen languages and filmed with background music by Shostakovich. It has also been a best-seller in China.

Mrs. Voynich deprecated my interest in her work. Her only concern is whether, as a result of Russian sales of 2½ million copies of her book, she will receive any royalties before she dies.

A Musical Occasion

THERE is, I hear, every hope that Mr. Igor Stravinsky will be well enough to attend the first London performance of his "Canticum Sacrum" in



IGOR STRAVINSKY

St. Martin-in-the-Fields on December 11.

Five weeks in hospital and a short convalescence in Rome have restored the greatest living musician to something approaching his normal vigour (he is in his seventy-fifth year) and alertness of mind. With a new fifty-minute ballet, "Agon," due for production next spring, and rumours of a big new symphonic commission, he is clearly putting age to good use, as Verdi and Richard Strauss did before him.

As a souvenir of Stravinsky's earlier years I reproduce here with the portrait drawing by Paul Klee which has not, to my

knowledge, been seen in England before. Himself a violinist and devotee of Mozart (he is said to have known "Don Giovanni" by heart) Klee met Stravinsky on a number of occasions: I should judge this portrait to have been done in 1913, when Stravinsky, Busoni and Hindemith took part in the famous Bauhaus Festival at Dessau.

Gas

I CAN give small comfort to motorists who hope to enjoy coupon-free mileage by enjoying some of the petrol substitutes of the war years.

That spectacular monstrosity, the coal-gas bag, is not



How it looked before.

likely to reappear unless anyone was pessimistic enough to hang on to its equipment in 1949. The conversion to coal gas is expensive and none of the former manufacturers I have spoken to think it worthwhile to go into business again.

There is even a catch to the enterprise of one firm that is getting ready to market a £30 converter set "sometime next week" which would drive a 10 h.p. car 150 miles off a £1 bottle of liquid butane gas.

I telephoned the butane people and they say their gas is a by-product of the oil industry and that they are already at their wits' end to keep up normal supplies.

People and Words

"That grotesque formation of economic geography, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, looks like acquiring a new and loftier peak. We should christen it 'Ben Macmillan'."

—MR. WILLIAM ROSS, M.P.

"It is difficult to comprehend the attacks on premium bonds when you reflect that the Church Commissioners made a profit of £100,000 out of Trinidad Oil in that most respectable of lotteries—the Stock Exchange."

—TWO RAY W. G. HARGREAVE THOMAS.

"My hon. and learned friend learned his Latin at Bonn, with the pronunciation of Bonn at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, with the pronunciation of Ashby-de-la-Zouch."

—MR. C. L. HALL, M.P.

"Are illiterate people any more objectionable in the nude than literate people?"

—Reply to British Sun Bathing Association conference.



SIR WINSTON

recent "chills" concealed something more grievous.

I can reassure them. He is a trifle bowed, his steps are shorter and his hair is whiter, but it is still the Winston we know. With that vitality, that quick, humorous eye, the splendidly theatrical affectations in the speech and those short gestures of the right hand, like someone flinging down a pack of cards.

After reading his brief, graceful address in that voice that, particularly in these times, brings a lump to the throat, Sir Winston rose again to thank his hostess and to wish Mr. Moorehead—"more good fortune in his further